

Listing of Claims:

1. *(Currently Amended)*: A system for enhancing visibility of a distant outdoor scene containing visual information in the presence of a multiplicity of specularly reflecting particles collectively comprising an interposed ~~interposing~~ specular media capable of substantially degrading atmospheric visibility, the system comprising:

(a) a light source capable of illuminating the distant outdoor scene in the presence of the interposed specular media, the light source including, or coupled to, a source polarization mechanism for generating polarized light that is substantially polarized at a light source polarization angle;

(b) an observation filter for filtering polarized light, the observation filter having a filter polarization angle of (i) substantially maximum light attenuation, or (ii) substantially minimum light attenuation; and

(c) a mechanism for adjusting the source polarization mechanism relative to the filter polarization angle, so as to improve visual contrast between the distant outdoor scene and the interposed specular media, wherein visual contrast is improved ~~the interposing specular media~~ by reducing or minimizing glare from the interposed specular media without regard to reducing ~~reflectivity~~ glare from any ~~specularly~~ reflecting object in the distant outdoor scene, and wherein the distant outdoor scene is situated at least two meters from the observation filter.

2. *(Currently Amended)*: The system of claim 1 wherein the ~~interposing~~ interposed specular media is comprised of ~~comprise~~ at least one of water droplets, ice, snow, fog, rain, sleet, hail, dirt, metallic particles, and particles of sand.

3. *(Original)*: The system of claim 2 wherein the light source polarization angle is substantially fixed, such that the mechanism for adjusting the source polarization mechanism relative to the filter polarization angle adjusts the filter polarization angle.

4. *(Original)*: The system of claim 2 wherein the filter polarization angle is substantially fixed, such that the mechanism that adjusts the source polarization mechanism relative to the filter polarization angle, adjusts the source polarization mechanism.

5. *(Original)*: The system of claim 2 wherein the filter polarization angle is adjustable and the light source polarization angle is also adjustable, and the mechanism for adjusting the source polarization mechanism relative to the filter polarization angle, adjusts both the source polarization mechanism and the filter polarization angle.

6. *(Currently Amended)*: A method for enhancing visibility of a distant outdoor scene containing visual information in the presence of a multiplicity of specularly reflecting particles collectively comprising an interposed ~~interposing~~ specular media capable of substantially degrading atmospheric visibility, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) generating polarized light capable of illuminating the distant outdoor scene in the presence of the interposed specular media, wherein the polarized light ~~that~~ is substantially polarized at a light source polarization angle;

(b) filtering polarized light with an observation filter having a filter polarization angle of (i) substantially maximum light attenuation, or (ii) substantially minimum light attenuation; and

(c) adjusting the source polarization angle relative to the filter polarization angle, so as to improve visual contrast between the distant outdoor scene and the interposed specular media, wherein visual contrast is improved ~~the interposing specular media~~ by reducing or minimizing glare from the interposed ~~interposing~~ specular media without regard to reducing glare ~~reflectivity~~ from any ~~specularly~~ reflecting object in the distant outdoor scene, wherein the distant outdoor scene is situated at least two meters from the observation filter.

7. **(Currently Amended):** The method of claim 6 wherein the interposed ~~interposing~~ specular media are interposed between a light source and a viewer, and the media comprise at least one of water droplets, ice, snow, fog, rain, sleet, hail, dirt, metallic particles, and particles of sand.

8. **(Original):** The method of claim 7 wherein the light source polarization angle is substantially fixed, such that the step of adjusting the source polarization angle relative to the filter polarization angle is performed by adjusting the filter polarization angle.

9. **(Original):** The method of claim 7 wherein the filter polarization angle is substantially fixed, such that the step of adjusting the source polarization angle relative to the filter polarization angle is performed by adjusting the source polarization angle.

10. **(Original):** The method of claim 7 wherein the filter polarization angle is adjustable and the light source polarization angle is also adjustable, and the step of adjusting the source polarization angle relative to the filter polarization angle is performed by adjusting both the source polarization angle and the filter polarization angle.

11. **(Currently Amended):** A system for enhancing visibility of a distant outdoor scene containing visual information in the presence of a glare-producing surface situated in an outdoor environment and capable of substantially degrading atmospheric visibility, the system comprising:

(a) a light source capable of illuminating the distant outdoor scene in the presence of the glare-producing surface, the light source including, or coupled to, a source polarization mechanism for generating polarized light that is substantially polarized at a light source polarization angle; and

(b) a mechanism for adjusting the source polarization mechanism relative to the glare-producing surface, so as to reduce or minimize the amount of light from the light source that is reflected by the glare-producing surface in the outdoor environment without regard to reducing reflectivity from any ~~specularly~~ reflecting object in the distant outdoor scene, and wherein the glare-producing surface is situated at least two meters from the mechanism for adjusting the source polarization mechanism.

12. **(Original):** The system of claim 11 wherein the source polarization mechanism polarizes light at an angle within approximately thirty degrees of perpendicular to the glare-producing surface.

13. **(Original):** The system of claim 11 wherein the glare-producing surface is at least one of: the surface of a body of water, a concrete surface, an asphalt surface, and a surface of a building.

14. **(Currently Amended):** A method for enhancing visibility of a distant outdoor scene containing visual information in the presence of a glare-producing surface situated in an outdoor environment and capable of substantially degrading atmospheric visibility, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) generating polarized light capable of illuminating the distant outdoor scene in the presence of the glare-producing surface, wherein the light source ~~that~~ is substantially polarized at a light source polarization angle; and

(b) adjusting the source polarization mechanism relative to the glare-producing surface, wherein the light source polarization angle intersects the glare-producing surface in the outdoor environment at an intersection angle so as to reduce or minimize the amount of light from the light source that is reflected by the glare-producing surface without regard to reducing reflectivity from any ~~specularly~~ reflecting object in the distant outdoor scene, wherein the distant glare-producing surface is situated at least two meters from the source polarization mechanism.

15. **(Original):** The method of claim 14 wherein step (a) is performed such that the polarized light is polarized at an angle within approximately thirty degrees of perpendicular to the glare-producing surface.

16. **(Original):** The method of claim 14 wherein the glare-producing surface is at least one of: the surface of a body of water, a concrete surface, an asphalt surface, and a surface of a building.

17. **(Currently Amended):** An infrared-based system for enhancing night vision of a distant outdoor scene including an object that produces infrared glare and at least one other object, the system comprising:

(a) an infrared light source including, or coupled to, a source polarization mechanism for generating polarized light that is substantially polarized at a light source polarization angle, wherein the infrared light source is capable of illuminating the distant outdoor scene;

(b) an observation filter for filtering polarized infrared light, the observation filter having a filter polarization angle of (i) substantially maximum infrared light attenuation, or (ii) substantially minimum infrared light attenuation; and

(c) a mechanism for adjusting the light source polarization angle relative to the filter polarization angle so as to improve visual contrast between the object that produces infrared glare and the at least one other object by reducing or minimizing glare from the object that produces infrared glare without regard to reducing infrared glare from the at least one other object, wherein the distant outdoor scene is situated at least two meters from the source polarization mechanism.

18. **(Original):** The system of claim 17 wherein the light source polarization angle is substantially fixed, such that the mechanism for adjusting the source polarization mechanism relative to the filter polarization angle adjusts the filter polarization angle, OR wherein the filter

polarization angle is substantially fixed, such that the mechanism for adjusting the source polarization mechanism relative to the filter polarization angle adjusts the source polarization mechanism, OR wherein the filter polarization angle is adjustable and the light source polarization angle is also adjustable, and the mechanism for adjusting the source polarization mechanism relative to the filter polarization angle adjusts both the source polarization mechanism and the filter polarization angle.

19. *(Currently Amended)*: An infrared-based method for enhancing night visibility of a distant outdoor scene including an object that produces infrared glare and at least one other object, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) generating polarized infrared light that is substantially polarized at a light source polarization angle, wherein the infrared light source is capable of illuminating the distant outdoor scene;

(b) filtering polarized infrared light with an observation filter having a filter polarization angle of (i) substantially maximum infrared light attenuation, or (ii) substantially minimum infrared light attenuation; and

(c) adjusting the source polarization angle relative to the filter polarization angle so as to improve visual contrast between the object that produces infrared glare and the at least one other object by reducing or minimizing glare from the object that produces infrared glare without regard to reducing infrared glare from the at least one other object, wherein the distant outdoor scene is situated at least one meter from the observation filter.

20. **(Original):** The method of claim 19 wherein the light source polarization angle is substantially fixed, such that the step of adjusting the source polarization angle relative to the filter polarization angle is performed by adjusting the filter polarization angle, OR wherein the filter polarization angle is substantially fixed, such that the step of adjusting the source polarization angle relative to the filter polarization angle is performed by adjusting the source polarization angle, OR wherein the filter polarization angle is adjustable and the light source polarization angle is also adjustable, and the step of adjusting the source polarization angle relative to the filter polarization angle is performed by adjusting both the source polarization angle and the filter polarization angle.